

CLAIMS:

1. A library checking system for use with a plurality of borrowable items provided with identifying means, the system comprising a housing within which a borrowable
5 item is contained during checking, an identification unit for detecting the identifying means of the item while within the housing and for supplying a signal identifying the item to central processing means, an input to the housing through which the item is insertable for checking, an output from the housing through which the item is discharged to a pick-up area in the event of the item being passed by the central
10 processing means as available for borrowing, and a movable floor within the housing on which the item is supported during detection by the identification unit, the movable floor being movable to cause the item to drop into a secure receptacle in the event of the item not being passed by the central processing means as available for borrowing.
- 15 2. A system according to claim 1, wherein the movable floor comprises a flap which is pivoted downwardly from its support position to cause the item to drop into the receptacle.
3. A system according to claim 2, wherein an electrical actuator is provided for
20 pivoting the flap downwardly to cause the item to drop into the receptacle.
4. A system according to claim 1, wherein the identification unit is adapted to detect radio frequency, bar code or magnetic strip identifying means or any combination of such identifying means on the items.
- 25 5. A system according to claim 1, wherein the input to the housing incorporates a sprung flap through which the item is insertable and behind which the sprung flap closes when the item is in position on the movable floor for detection by the identification unit.
- 30 6. A system according to claim 1, wherein the output from the housing incorporates an output door which is movable between a closed position retaining the

item on the movable floor for detection by the identification unit and an open position when the item is passed by the central processing unit as available for borrowing.

7. A system according to claim 6, wherein the output door comprises a flap which
5 is pivotable outwardly from its closed position to cause the item to be discharged to the pick-up area.

8. A system according to claim 7, wherein an electrical actuator is provided for
10 pivoting the flap outwardly to cause the item to be discharged to the pick-up area.

9. A system according to claim 1, wherein the movable floor is incorporated in an
inclined surface such that the item is slidable down the inclined surface when it passes
through the input and the output.

10. A system according to claim 1, wherein a closed chamber is provided for
15 containing the receptacle for items not passed by the central processing means as available for borrowing.

11. A system according to claim 10, wherein the closed chamber is provided with a
20 door which may be opened to enable the receptacle to be removed.

12. A system according to claim 1, wherein a verification unit adapted to accept a
card, fingerprint or iris scan is provided for verifying the identity of a user and for
25 passing a verification signal to the central processing means.

13. A system according to claim 1, wherein a payment unit is provided for accepting
payment from a user in the event that payment is required and for passing a payment
signal to the central processing means.

14. A system according to claim 1, wherein an instruction display is provided for
30 displaying instructions to the user on use of the system in response to instruction signals from the central processing means.

15. A system according to claim 1, wherein a printer unit is provided for issuing a receipt to the user in response to an instruction signal from the central processing means.

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16. A system according to claim 1, wherein a security gate is provided which is openable to provide user access to the pick-up area for collection of the item without setting off a security gate alarm in response to an authorisation signal from the central processing means.

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